ROADS

its well-constructed and durable roads which cross at all parts of the country. For those who have not the leisure to travel slowly in their own automobiles or one of those which may be easily hired with careful and skilled chauffeurs, and yet who wish to travel independent of the time-tables of the official service, there are motor-coaches available which make excellent connections with each other in any town. Albania may be reached by good roads from Greece and Yugoslavia; by sea on Italian, Greek or Yugoslavian lines and by air from any metropolis in a few short hours.

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

road two loaded donkeys might meet and pass, but two loaded horses could not. When these met, one or the other had to step aside from the road, turning back, if need be to find a suitable place in which to do so. This was almost invariably of nature's making; there were no artificial passing places as on narrow motor roads in England.

Load generally determined priority of passage. To use Albanian phraseology, when a riding-saddle met a riding-saddle on a horse-track the one with no saddle-bags or other load besides the rider had to turn back. The riding-saddle had to make way for the loaded pack-saddle, but had priority over an empty one. When two pack-saddles met, the one loaded and the other empty, the latter had to make way for the former. When they were both loaded or both empty, the one which was nearer a possible place at which to step off the road had to turn back. The same rules applied to carts. In the rare cases where there was plenty of room for two loaded horses or carts, there was no 'Keep right' or 'Keep left'; they could pass on whichever side they wished.

The rules about priority were apt to be honoured in the breach rather than the observance. A man who was turned back on his road felt, even if priority was not his, as much disgraced as if his gun had been taken from him. His honour was lost, and could not be redeemed unless he killed his rival. There have been many deaths for the sake of precedence. The men of Godolesh, who were satisfied when the offender was fined by the elders, were condemned by their neighbours as soft and citified. But even in Godolesh there was no more fertile cause of murder than disputes about who should have the right of way. The trouble arose because priority rules were often confused, especially on purpose by strong wilful men, with the general law of road ownership. As enunciated by Father Gjeçov, this law said that a village street or a public highway was nobody's individual perquisite, but belonged to one man as much as to another. Hence, the living and the dead—traveller and live-stock, bride and corpse—had an absolute right to use either, and no man, even if the road passed close to the door of his house, could deny this right.

A road was free to all. It was for breaking this general law that highway robbery was punished so much more severely than other forms of theft, and that a traveller who killed a dangerous dog on a highway did not have to compensate its owner.

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685 A man could not, without the elders' consent, close an old road
491 that, having been used by his fellow-travellers, bridal parties and
494 funeral processions, was public property. If he did, it was reopened
423 by the elders, sometimes by force. He was often fined too. If he had ploughed it up, so that its line was uncertain, they sought out an old trustworthy man and made him show them under oath and in the presence of witnesses where it had been. Then the offender was ordered to open it again, removing any fence he had erected and, by way of penalty, to give a meal and small fee to the old man and the witnesses. If he shut it up once more he was liable to be shot.

491 As always, there were exceptions to the general rule. Owing to
494 the marshy nature of the land most of the fields near the mouth of
423 the river Mat were enclosed by hedges of living willow and
[487] communicated with each other by stiles, not gates. If the public, having formed a shorter route, no longer used a certain field-path, the owner of the field could close the path and the stiles at either end without any compulsion to reopen them; the public had the shorter road and one was enough. If a man bought a field which had a road round it and a right-of-way through it, he had the right to close the latter and to make the public go by the road; only if a long detour was involved could he be forced to leave the right-of-way open. On the other hand, if his new-bought field was bordered not by a road but by another field, he could not block the right-of-way unless he made a new road entirely within his own boundaries. This was substantially the law which governed changes of road all over north Albania. In Lumë a distinction was drawn between permanent roads which had to remain open all the year round and winter roads which could be closed in summer. The first were known as 'roads with a boundary'; the most important led to the high pastures on Mount Gjalicë. Winter roads generally went through fields and were closed to men and animals from seed-time to harvest; as soon as the crop was in, the roads were opened to traffic. If somebody had great need to use one during the season, he might take what he could carry and go along the very edge of the sown land, taking pains not to damage the growing crop. He could not make a habit of this or take his horse and must not forget to ask leave from the owner of the land. Again, a few roads to the Alpine pastures passed through wheat fields on their way. As a necessary link with the high pastures they could not be completely closed even when the fields were under crop. An ingenious

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compromise reconciled the public's need to use the road and the individual's wish to protect his crop without incurring the intolerable expense of making a fence or wall. One neighbour put two hurdles across his half of the road, one where it entered and the other where it left his land; both were low enough for men to jump over and high enough to keep back animals. Each had a hole at the bottom that was too small for animals to crawl through but big enough to let logs through when they were dragged down from the mountain for fuel; logs for fuel were such a necessity of life that they could not be denied a road. The other neighbour threw across his half of the road the Christ's Thorn which grows all over the plains of Albania, thus making a formidable barrier for men and beasts. Shutting up this half of the road did not matter; animals had no right in any case to go near a sown field, and the other man's hurdle was sufficient for human traffic. After harvest the thorns were removed, leaving that half of the road clear. The hurdle remained in place, as the clear half of the road was wide enough for the traffic.

In 1935 a man from Nangë in Lumë blocked the road along an irrigation channel for the summer, half of it with a low wall and half with thorns, so that men, but not animals, could still travel on it. He had wished to sow maize in his adjoining field and been too poor and short-handed to construct a fence to keep out animals. Since irrigation was so important, there was a special law that 'a road beside an irrigation channel can't be shut up'. Consequently, his act was highly illegal. But his poverty was thought to excuse it, and he had mitigated his offence by making a new road for animals at the top of his field, where there was no maize. In so doing he had confused the right to block a road for the summer only and the need, when closing one permanently, to provide a substitute. For the law forbidding a man to block an old road permanently was not rigid. If he had good reason for the change, secured the consent of the elders (a most important point), and provided a satisfactory substitute, he could even move a very old road. It was only if he failed to satisfy these conditions that he had to leave it where it was. The poor man just mentioned transgressed by not consulting the elders; their unusual clemency lay in refraining, out of consideration for his poverty, from reopening the road.

When a man applied for leave to close an old village road, he generally pleaded damage by passers-by or a need for more land to

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
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To the Land of the Eagle

When I came down in the morning to get a cup of coffee before leaving for Tirana, I found the waiter asleep in the " coffee-room " with the remains of last night's supper on the uncleared tables and every window tightly shut. The noise I made in rushing to open something and save myself from immediate asphyxiation woke him up, and he arose from his bed—to strain a simile to its utmost limits—like Aphrodite from the waves, completed a scanty toilet with the aid of a comb, and attended to my modest requirements in the way of breakfast. At seven the car came and I departed, nothing loth.

The car was a nine-seater, and the other passengers, including several Roman-Catholic priests, were going by it to San Giovanni di Medua, whence a steamer connection is maintained with Bari, the Italian seaport on the opposite side of the Adriatic. *Rome—Bari—San Giovanni di Medua* is the direct route to Albania, and I was accordingly surprised to find the place so small and insignificant. It contained little more, as far as I could see, than a tiny wharf, a custom-house, a police post, and a few single-storied shacks —mostly coffee-houses—along the waterfront. The bay being very shallow, the steamer was anchored some distance out, and passengers had to be taken aboard by shore boats. But San Giovanni di Medua is no worse in this respect than the other ports of Albania, Durazzo, Valona, and Santi Quaranta, which all suffer, as I found later, from the same drawback. In none of these places is the water deep enough to allow a vessel to lie at the quay.

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
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609 consulate staff during my stay, I offered the maid—who had, incidentally, washed all my linen for me—a sum equivalent, I think, to about 2s. When at last, after some difficulty, I succeeded in making her accept it she seized and kissed my hand—to my intense embarrassment. And Vojn, who had carried my things for miles over the mountains and had given me ungrudging attention, behaved in exactly the same way and at first refused my modest offering. His manner did not, however, convey that he was too proud to accept the tip or that I had made a *faux pas* in offering it, but merely that what he had done he had done in goodwill and not with any idea of reward. It was refreshing, in these money-grubbing days, to meet with such an unexpected trait.

349 Before I left Argyrocastron I explored the old fortress. It proved to be a vast place full of arches, tunnels, and broken masses of masonry overrun with scarlet poppies. A few sleepy-looking, barrack-like buildings housed a few sleepy soldiers. The battlements gave a fine view of the town, the valley, and the mountains.

● 494 On making enquiries about getting to Koritza I found that a post lorry was leaving at midday. I therefore booked a front seat for which the price was 150 liras (Italian money being current in this part of Albania). I thought at the time that this was a rather heavy charge as Koritza was, as I then fondly imagined, only about three hours journey away. We should be there, I thought, in the classic English phrase, " in time for tea ". We were not. Nor were we there in time for tea on the day following. So I was slightly out in

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Lorries

494 my calculations, and the fare, for a journey of nearly two days' duration, was after all by no means unreasonable.

The Albanian post lorries are of the familiar military type, and I came across no ambulance waggons like those in which I had suffered such discomfort in Montenegro. There is a good deal of traffic on these roads, not only by post lorries but by other lorries, which also belong to the State. A more or less regular service plies between Santi Quaranta and Koritza, the most important town in Northern Albania, with freight, passengers, and live-stock. I often noticed passengers sitting amongst sheep, lambs, and goats with every appearance of contentment. They did not seem at all incommoded. But in the post lorries, fortunately for me, livestock were not carried.

361 Tepeleni, our first stopping place, was destroyed by an earthquake some years ago and it has never yet been properly rebuilt. At the present time it consists of an irregular
265 street of shanties made of lath and tarred paper. As soon as we arrived the lorry-conductor took me to a restaurant—a
[262] lop-sided wooden shack with an earthen floor—where two yokels sat eating maize-bread and yaghourt, and a third man, more opulent, was devouring fried fish with his fingers.
[524] Coffee was called for and, despite my protests, paid for by the conductor—little courtesies such as this being the commonplaces of travel in benighted and uncivilised Albania.

505 Beyond Tepeleni a river barred our way. There was a bridge, but it was in ruins like the rest of the village, and the crossing had to be made by a ferry. The roadway on

361 Peshkopia has grown rapidly because the international boundary commission of 1913 cut off the Dibra mountaineers from their natural market town of Big Dibra. Hence many of the Big Dibra men moved to Peshkopia, which is just inside Albania. In the same way Prizren was cut off from the Luma people, who built up Kukës; Jakova from the Malsia e Jakovës men, who also go to Kukës. On the western side no such disturbance has taken place. Scutari, Lesh, and Kruja now, as for centuries past, serve as market towns for the mountain people.

124 463 *Services*: Only 12 men are listed under "services." Two of these are innkeepers. One is a Puka man, host at Rrap, his native place. The other is an outsider, a Kruja man, whose inn is at Gur i Bardh in Mati. Kruja men specialize in innkeeping, and in the heyday of Ottoman power might be found all over the Turkish Empire, including Asia Minor. These *hanjis* marry in Kruja, and do not mix with the populations in the regions in which they do their business.

Three men were restaurant-keepers: one Koplik man, whose shop was presumably in Scutari, a Luma man, and a Malsia e Jakovës man, with shops in Kukës. The barber was a Malsia e Jakovës man, working in Kukës. Of the 2 waiters, one was a local man serving the gendarmes in their post at Puka, the other a Big Dibra man working in the hotel in Peshkopia, a new institution. Of the 3 listed as servants, all were local. One served the prefect and another the teacher in the new government center in Bureli. The third worked for a priest in Mirdita.

Of the 12 "services" listings, 9 can be accounted for as a result of recent political events.

[494] *Transport*: Transportation in Ghegnia in 1929 meant but one thing—the services of *kiragis*, those incredibly tough horse-drivers who would take you and your goods anywhere, and try to raise the price on the road, once you were at their mercy. Three out of 4 came from Dibra, and one from Malsia e Jakovës. As far as I know, all *kiragis*, like all *hanjis*, are Moslems.

[441] *Trade*: All merchants in the mountain country are shopkeepers; there are no large or complex commercial institutions. Of the 31 shop-

491 animals to cross, and have waded up to my chin at night, with snow on either bank. When the streams are swollen, animals and men are not infrequently drowned. There is or was an old Turkish bridge across the White Drin, from Kukës to the northern bank (fig. 9, *b*). Several wooden bridges crossed the Black Drin in Dibra. On the road from Krasniqi to Shoshi, I have crossed a bridge which consisted of 2 poles, one to walk on, the other a little higher and to one side, to use as a rail.

501 In a few places, ferry boats are available, which operate by the principle of changing the mooring position of the cable after each crossing, so that the power of the stream will push the boat diagonally across to the other bank. There was one such at Kukës across the Black Drin, another at Bureli over the Mati. Other observers have witnessed Ghegs crossing these streams on inflated skins, but I have never seen it.

Navigation in Ghegnia is very limited. Although Nopcsa has a picture of a man in a boat at Merturi, I have seen it only on the lower course of the Drin, between Vau i Denjës and Scutari, where special boatmen ferry passengers to town in a few hours, to save the day's march over the road. These boats are long dugout canoes, usually double. The boatman propels them by sculling, like the gondoliers of Venice. The men who run the ferries, and these boatmen on the lower Drin, are without doubt specialists, as nearly full time as the traffic requires. Probably not more than a dozen men ply these trades. Much more numerous are the *kiragis*, the professional horse-drivers who may be seen on all of the roads in Moslem country, and in some Catholic tribes as well. The *kiragis* in our series were Dibra men, but others come from outside the tribal area, from such places as Elbasan and Tirana.

494 463

The *kiragi* is a hard-bitten man, disillusioned early in life by a close observation of human behavior under stress, since all travel in Ghegnia is difficult. He is a non-combatant, a man with no family ties in the regions in which he works, and not worth killing. Anyone who robs him too often will keep trade away and cut off the supply of needed imports. He will rent out anywhere from one to a half dozen horses, to go anywhere the road will take him, and the rate per day has to be argued over at length. He insists on taking grain for his

1/1 [See cat. 116, p. 109--Analyst]

494 463 horses at the customer's expense, and will refuse to go on if the grain is exhausted. All kinds of situations arise to produce arguments between *kiragi* and customer, such as the unexpectedly high price of grain in a certain place, inn charges, and the condition of the horses.

Besides carrying passengers and their goods, the *kiragi* will do errands; he will carry goods to market without their owners, sell them, and take his commission; then he will bring back a specified list of purchased objects. He must be reasonably honest or he will lose the traffic. At the same time the mountaineers who hire him are spared the risk of crossing hostile territory.

[473] *Kiragis* are either in business for themselves or in partnership, or working on shares with an investing capitalist. Since Islam prohibits interest, the share system is the one employed. It is not big business, for the maximum number of persons involved will not exceed a half dozen, including the boys whom the *kiragi* takes with him to help with the horses. It is, however, one of the few ways in which the otherwise closed country of the Gheg mountaineers is systematically and constantly penetrated. In 1929 there must have been at least a hundred such professionals on the roads every day.

485 In Moslem country the principal roads are equipped, at appropriate distances, with inns. As with tourist cabins in the United States, it is best to start at daybreak or earlier, and get in well before sunset, for the inns are often full well before night. The usual inn consists of 3 rooms; a large stable, which occupies about three-fourths of the whole; a chamber with a low ceiling built into one corner of the building, some 14 feet wide by 30 or 40 feet long, with a fireplace at the far end; and a cubicle which serves as the *hanji's* (innkeeper's) private quarters, office, and store.

When you enter the inn, the *hanji* sees that you unload your animals, and assigns them space in the stable. He has straw there, and sometimes grain if you have not brought your own. Then he gives each guest a section of the floor, which is divided into 3 strips, the 2 on the sides being about 6 feet wide, and the center one, 2 feet. Guests sleep side by side on the lateral strips, with the center reserved as a passageway. The guests feed themselves.